

EMERGING TRENDS OF CONTEMPORARY WARS IN SOUTH ASIA

Sara Nazir

Department of Strategic Studies
Air University, Islamabad
saranazeer2@gmail.com

Abstract

Since ancient times, wars have been embedded in societies as the human civilization evolved. Even though the nature of war remained same throughout the human history, its character has always evolved with the evolution of technology. Every time a new technology enters the international arena, it had an impact on warfare. In modern times, the technology has a significant influence on how wars were fought during the 1950s especially in South Asia. However, the emergence of hybrid warfare has become a new trend in South Asia specifically in recent times. This research aims to understand the emerging trends of warfare in South Asia with a special focus on hybrid war as a growing phenomenon in the region. It will rely more on qualitative research methodology. Since every technological advancement has affected warfare differently, the study will predict the potential future of hybrid warfare in South Asia. The study concludes that the conflicts in South Asia would likely to remain hybrid in their conduct and may further intensify with the emergence of new technologies.

Keywords: Contemporary Wars; Emerging Trends; Hybrid Warfare; Emerging Technologies; South Asia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of mankind's history, wars have been ingrained in societies as a necessary component of society. As civilizations evolved, humans began to participate in activities that were intended to eliminating their opponents. Over the period, people modernized the role of combat, making it even more complicated than it had been in the past. This seems to be consistent with earlier studies, which described how the emergence of military tendencies coincided with shifts in cognitive processes and how the development of both peace and conflict was facilitated by the same thinking [1]. The notion of warfare changed with technological advancements, yet combat has stayed the same throughout history. Every time a new technique to fight a war was invented, it had an impact on the strategies and tactics being used. In each era of war that has occurred across civilizations,

innovative war plans have been crucial. The technology used to have a significant influence on how the wars were fought during the 1950s, notably in the South Asian region. Later on the overt nuclearization of South Asia in 1998 also had a significant impact on the character of warfare in the region. However, since the use of nuclear weapons may be catastrophic for mankind and can only be employed for deterrence, the likelihood of a large scale war has significantly reduced in South Asia. Both India and Pakistan have switched their focus to unconventional warfare tactics. The term "Hybrid-Warfare" refers to an idea in warfare that has emerged since the start of the twenty-first century and involves both technological and human involvement to outpace the opponent. The idea has transformed every aspect of combat since its emergence in the South Asia.

The concept of hybrid warfare has become increasingly popular in South Asia in recent times. With the utilization of different tactics, for instance, misinformation, economic harm, political unrest, extremism, coercive diplomacy, domestic conflicts, and proxies against the enemy, hybrid warfare aims to damage the enemy state from within and bring it into disrepute at the international arena. The adversaries in South Asia label nearly every occurrence that provokes conflict among both states as a hybrid war. The research seeks to comprehend the modern conflict tendencies in South Asia. It will specifically examine the hybrid war as a growing phenomenon in South Asian warfare by differentiating it from traditional warfare. Since advancements in technology may affect the conduct warfare in any way, therefore, the study also explore the impact of these technologies on the future of hybrid warfare in South Asia especially between India and Pakistan. Even though emerging technologies have been considered in this paper as a new instrument for warfare, it is more likely that conflicts will continue to be hybrid despite their introduction.

2 PRINCIPLES OF MODERN WAR

2.1 Information Domain:

It's not a novel strategy to obtain information from multiple sources to utilize against opponents. Romans were among those who used embassies for spying in different states. Similarly, spies were used to collect information in WW1 and American civil war. The domain where data is gathered, processed, changed, and distributed is known as the information realm. Among the most notable cases are psychological manipulation, information warfare, and the media [2].

2.2 Social Domain:

Politicians base their assessments of the will of people on religion, society, ethnicity, customs, beliefs, and behaviors. It also refers to the area of human activity where individuals and groups of different cultures interact, share ideas, and come to mutually acceptable decisions [3].

2.3 Cognitive Domain:

It refers to the field where fundamental ideas like purpose, doctrine, strategies, procedures, security norms, and war plans first appear. Kinetic and non-kinetic aspects are combined in this field. The objectives, plans, and tactics used in non-kinetic warfare are what define the cognitive realm [4].

3. HYBRID WAR AS AN EMERGING TREND IN SOUTH ASIA

Hybrid warfare is among the most debated phenomena of the twenty first century. As the term "hybrid" indicates, it is a combination of prior conflicts, including; both military and non-military operations. In hybrid warfare, a variety of elements are combined to wage war on the opponent. Hybrid warfare has origins in earlier war-fighting strategies, therefore it is not entirely new as a classification of war, but it has the power to influence how a battle is perceived in the future. There have been several conflicts throughout history in which several state and non-state actors, have used a mix of irregular, conventional, and non-conventional tactics to achieve political and military goals. It is a military strategy that employs both kinetic and non-kinetic tactics of combat to advance political goals. In the military realm, the techniques utilized in hybrid warfare get an ancient legacy of productive operations. Risks and actions of warfare are defined and identified using hybrid warfare. [5] In recent years, hybrid warfare refers to irregular and conventional operations that also include cyber-

attacks and escalating domestic proxy conflicts. Attacks are carried out by states against other states, with non-state entities also taking part. Given that hybrid warfare incorporates all of the earlier forms of conflict, the idea is not new. It also uses strategies employed in conflicts from centuries past, such as the use of awe and shock, and espionage. [6] Due to unfamiliarity with the term or the fundamentals of hybrid warfare or any other developing tools and approaches, it is frequently assumed as a newer concept. Due to a lack of understanding, a confusion still exists about the concepts of hybrid warfare, fourth-generation warfare, and fifth-generation warfare. By targeting a state's weak areas, hybrid conflicts are forced upon it, and the targeted government only realizes the threat after it has been completely waged against it [7]. These wars are conducted to exacerbate state identity conflicts and exploit historical cultural, religious, and geographic fault-lines that, in the end, cause a state's destabilization, and ultimately strategic stability of a specific region.

The three primary forms of warfare that make up hybrid warfare could also be further divided into different categories [8].

1. **Asymmetric Warfare**-This also covers unconventional and non-kinetic forms of combat
2. **Irregular Warfare**-encompasses guerrilla warfare, terrorist, and other irregular attacks
3. **Compound Warfare**-a quick deployment of regular forces with an irregular group using guerilla tactics against the adversary

The UK Ministry of Defense characterized hybrid warfare as;

"Hybrid warfare can be characterized as a comprehensive strategy based on a broad, complex, adaptive, and often highly integrated combination of conventional and unconventional means. It uses overt and covert activities, which can include military, paramilitary, irregular, and civilian actors, targeted to achieve (geo) political and strategic objectives. Hybrid warfare is directed at an adversary's vulnerabilities, focused on complicating decision making, and conducted across the full spectrum (which can encompass diplomatic, political, information, military, economic, financial, intelligence, and legal activity) whilst creating ambiguity and deniability. Hybrid strategies can be applied by both state and non-state actors" [9].

Another way to define hybrid warfare is "warfare that involves a blend of irregular forces and ground forces are employed to target the enemy, by leveraging means like media, economics, political unrest, extremism, coercive diplomacy, domestic conflicts and proxy strikes, to internally weaken and globally embarrass any state."

Owing to the hybrid character of the term itself, hybrid warfare is seen as a vague and poorly defined notion. Similar to many other phenomena, hybrid warfare lacks a generally accepted definition. It is often described in accordance with the way how an institution understands it. From 2002 till 2015, the idea grew in acceptance, notably after the Russian Hybrid War in Ukraine [10]. The idea spread throughout South Asia only when military leaders of Pakistan and India began discussing it. Military leaders in South Asia were the first to promote the idea of hybrid warfare, followed by policymakers [11].

One of the main characteristics of hybrid warfare which makes it even more successful is the opponent's ability to simultaneously attack the ideology and kinetic centers of gravity, reducing a state's available physical and mental space. The aim of hybrid warfare is to shake up ideologies, alter a country's identity, and even bring about regime change rather than to achieve a decisive conquest [12].

Here are a few indicators of hybrid warfare in South Asia. The attack on the Sri Lankan cricket team in Lahore in 2009 resulted in the suspension of international cricket matches and events in Pakistan, the rejection of Pakistani players' visas for Asian competitions [13], and economic coercion in the FATF (Financial Action Task Force). The 2008 Mumbai attacks, the January 2016 Pathankot attack, and the Uri incident all ultimately ended in a blame game, further putting strain on India-Pakistan relations. Terrorist attacks on several important military institutions, which include GHQ, Mehran Naval Air Base, and Kamra Air Base, have also undermined national morale. The 2014 Army Public School Incident, the involvement of RAW (Research and Analysis Wing) in exacerbating security issues in Karachi and Baluchistan, generating economic and political upheaval in Pakistan, and have risen in recent times. During the past 20 years, countless Pakistani websites have been hacked.

3.1 Fifth Generation Warfare

In the fifth generation, non-state entities conduct hostilities without any defined goal, which shapes the perception that these forms of unconventional warfare

are driven by hatred. This may restrict future generations' access to contemporary joint arms forces. Rather than employing physical combat techniques, this novel notion in warfare develops the fight for ideas and curbs extremism internationally.

Fifth-generation warfare has already been waged against Pakistan through the media, cyber-attacks, money laundering, bank account hacking, etc. [14]. Electronic and social media are the firing line of fifth-generation conflict. The primary goal of the fifth generation is to use various techniques to target the audience to have a psychological influence. India has been active in conducting psychological operations against Pakistan through terrorist attacks, deploying spies to Baluchistan, and campaigns on social media with the help of local and international news outlets [15]. These agencies have contributed to the propagation of anti-state agendas. In 2016, the arrest of Indian Spy Kalboshan Yadav, an Indian Navy officer, in Baluchistan is evident of the fact that India has waged an active hybrid campaign against Pakistan. He revealed the Indian government's intentions for hybrid warfare, including the use of Baluchistan's territory for political purposes. He confessed that by instilling a criminal mindset that encourages murder and disrupts the operations of Gwadar port-hybrid assaults on CPEC (China-Pakistan Economic Corridor), he has contributed to the unrest in Pakistan [16]. Then, in March 2020, a second RAW agent was captured at Karachi University for carrying out criminal, terrorist, and anti-state propaganda-making operations [17].

3.2 Information Warfare

Information warfare is a term for fifth-generation warfare. Both nations are emphasizing information warfare, obtaining the enemy's data through spies and exploiting it against them. States are focusing on information warfare, media warfare (which encompasses social media and electronic media), and psychological warfare in this area. It concerns information gathering as well as information that may be changed and presented to the public incorrectly. In information warfare, the media is a key player. The fight to manage perceptions is fifth-generation warfare. Disinformation is an essential part of almost every military doctrine, with the main objective having to be to intimidate the enemy [18].

The formation of narratives is greatly influenced by the media. Media is one of the main tools used in contemporary information warfare to target the population of the enemy. The Indian government is using the media as a battleground to ensure the success

of hybrid war against Pakistan. By propagating false information and concentrating on the public, the media is employed as a weapon in hybrid warfare to accomplish a specific goal. Certain people have extremist beliefs; the narrative cultivated by the media directly targets them, and they can be misused to spread chaos and instability in a nation. The Magic Bullet theory by Harold Lasswell proposes that media messages are directly fired like a gunshot into the targeted viewers' minds. The audience is influenced by whatever the media broadcasts. As a result of the efficiency with which youth might be targeted by social media, the Indian government is investing billions of dollars in propaganda campaigns on Pakistan. People were easily misled by such agendas supported by the enemy state through the media since the general population was unaware of the notion and growing threat of conflict [19].

3.3 Fake News

The Indian government supports yellow journalism internationally because it presents Pakistan to the world as a state that supports terrorism and uses the media to broadcast false information. The Indian government spends \$7 billion on media efforts against Pakistan [15], which include the use of print media, television, movies, plays, and literature. The Indian government released numerous applications supported by RAW as part of their media campaigns. RAW officials broadcast the radio station in the Balochi language, making it one of the tools used to incite hatred for Pakistan among the Balochistan people. India is making similar attempts to destroy Pakistan's national identity under the name "ZEE SALAM" [15]. To further pursue its agenda, the Indian government is spending a significant amount of money to help journalists and overseas news organizations, notably Pakistani journalists and social activists. Also, revealed in the EU Dis info Lab report of 2020 [15]. On social media, Indian RAW has set up some 350 phone identities with Balochi names, with which they post, share, and give speeches against Pakistan. These fictitious personas quickly spread any post or comment made by journalists or media organizations. In terms of electronic media, one of the well-known Pakistani networks already features morning shows and dramas that reflect Indian culture [20].

The largest dis info network in the world was revealed in a study released in end of 2020 that exposed Indian chronicles. In a 15-year campaign against Pakistan, an EU-based Dis info Lab based in Brussels exposed India for using hundreds of fictitious media outlets operating in various nations to disseminate false information and advance India's anti-Pakistan agenda.

India made an effort to malign Pakistan through the network by portraying a tolerant attitude toward the rest of the world. The Indian agenda has been supported and promoted in the world community by the Indian news organization ANI (Asian News International).

3.4 Diplomatic Isolation

The Indian government is trying to harm Pakistan by distributing fake information through utilizing its diplomatic channels. Given the aforementioned facts, it is admirable that India is humiliating Pakistan to manipulating the international community from coming closer to Pakistan. Pakistan is being isolated to limit its relations with other countries and halt import and export deals. To isolate the adversary state, media campaigns that circulate false information are created. In his speech, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi stated that his country has isolated Pakistan and expects China and the rest of the world to stand behind India, providing further evidence of India's intentions against Pakistan [21].

3.5 Religion and Extremism

Creating tensions between a state's ethnic, religious, and cultural groups is another strategy used in modern warfare and for that matter hybrid war. The South Asian region is based on a variety of religions, but India and Pakistan, which have hostile relations, have two more notable religions with rigid ideologies. When it comes to their faith, both sides have fanatical attitudes. The religious and cultural traditions of both states are being taken advantage of. The internal conflicts of each other's states are being made as dramatic as possible by both India. By supporting the insurgent organizations and paying them to commit the killings throughout the nation, India has contributed to exacerbating the internal identity crisis in Pakistan [22].

The most typical strategies used in contemporary hybrid conflicts include; attacking the opponent's ideology, emphasizing the state's internal identity conflicts, and exploiting cultural roots, religious views, and geographic concerns. States launched covert attacks on the identity pillars of other states by utilizing geography, socioeconomic values, ideology, history, and religion. External forces may undermine this identification by taking advantage of internal factors or by preying on a state's weaknesses through fabricated conflicts. Due to religious differences, the South Asian region is dealing with multifaceted identity challenges [23]. The conventional military has little bearing on the enemy state in this type of conflict,

instead, what is more important are the strategies employed against the opponent to obstruct his capacity for independent thought and decision-making. It is a tool for starting a campaign against the enemy to pursue political goals through the use of kinetic and non-kinetic warfare tactics. The populace is misled by the ongoing internal conflicts, which include using them against their country by focusing on underdeveloped or neglected areas and fueled by outside forces like separatist movements, a faltering economy, and fanaticism. To isolate a state from the rest of the world and create political instability, non-state actors utilize proxy wars to assault state infrastructure and corruption is highlighted, as it is in the case of Pakistan. These are a few of the conflicts that have been fabricated to undermine a state's sense of identity.

The Pakistani territory has frequently been used by the Indian intelligence agency (RAW) to wage hybrid warfare against Pakistan. The spy who is supported by RAW is typically apprehended by Pakistani forces while agitating against the government there. Another instance of a planned non-state act of violence is the arrest of Kalboshan Yadav and another RAW agent at Karachi University in March 2020 for propagandizing, anti-state, and illegal actions like terrorism and anti-nation narrative construction [24].

3.6 Economic Warfare

The principles of modern economic warfare are also a part of hybrid warfare since it entails export restrictions and sanctions. This is what has happened in the FATF; a case of a false impression presented to the international community is carried out, by utilizing the fake news network as exposed in the EU Dis info Lab report of 2020.

The hacking of bank accounts and even banks been used in economic warfare and has caused significant financial damage to a state. Economic sanctions and money laundering are also part of economic warfare. South Asia is also experiencing a smaller-scale economic conflict. The competition between the nations of South Asia can also be viewed as economic warfare. India and Pakistan are attempting to influence a state's decisions to strengthen their economic position. Regional states are not the only ones engaging in economic warfare; larger countries also play a significant role in this area. By building the Gwadar port in Baluchistan, China is helping Pakistan advance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). For Pakistan, CPEC is seen as a game-changer and an economic booster. It is also seen as a factor in the nation's rising employment rate. By

supporting rebel criminal activities around the CPEC route and Gwadar port, the Indian government and intelligence agencies are exploiting the CPEC project as a weak spot in Pakistan to strike it. By launching terrorist attacks, targeting the Chinese embassy, attacking Chinese residents across the nation, and supporting the separatist activities in Balochistan, the Indian government and military are attempting to undermine the CPEC using all available tools of modern warfare. Most recently, in April 2022, a woman blew up a bomb at Karachi University, killing three Chinese citizens. The Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) reportedly claimed responsibility for the attack. The attack was intended to frighten the Chinese people and government into leaving Pakistan and ending the CPEC project.

“The cowardly incident is a direct attack on the Pakistan-China friendship and ongoing cooperation. Pakistan and China are close friends and iron brothers. Pakistan attaches great importance to safety and security of Chinese nationals, projects, and institutions in Pakistan”—*Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan*. [25]

3.7 Cyber Warfare

Pakistan is the target of Indian waged fifth-generation and hybrid warfare, including cyber-attacks and bank account hacking. Pakistan has been compelled to establish its cyber defense forces and related institutions, given the in the growing role of cyber warfare. India is also working on creating propaganda to damage Pakistan's interests, especially vis-à-vis Afghanistan. India has established a Defense Cyber Agency near its border with Pakistan, which directly reports to the National Cyber Security Advisor. The Indian cyber agency is capable of taking both offensive and defensive measures [15]. A cyber-attack by India on Bank Islami in 2018 cost the company 2.6 billion rupees [26]. India has frequently been active in the hacking Pakistani government and educational institutions websites. The state bank has already been the victim of an electronic robbery. The infrastructure for the country's power is being disrupted by hacking. The air traffic control at the airports in Karachi and Islamabad has been attacked and shut down. A large demoralizing campaign is launched on social media to disturb the public [27].

3.8 Separatists Movement- Proxy War

Terrorism is referred to as being centered in South Asia, and it has a long history in the region. Most separatist organizations have their roots in India and Pakistan, two major actors in the region that are

constantly threatened by terrorism. Terrorism and non-state actors have been fully utilized by India, like other tactics, to undermine Pakistan's stability, which has a direct impact on the strategic stability of South Asia. Several separatist organizations, including Mukti Bahini, the Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and the BLA, have been born and raised by India.

Global powers have a significant impact on South Asia's power transition and other political issues. Proxy wars are waged by international forces using Pakistani citizens.

3.9 Political Turmoil

India has sponsored political parties in Pakistan and used them as weapons against that country. A political faction in Pakistan called the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM), which has been active in causing turmoil in the port city of Karachi, was revealed to be backed and funded by India. British authorities discovered evidence of money laundering, informed Pakistan of the activities, and assisted Pakistan in reducing the funding of terrorism in Karachi. Another significant problem in Pakistan is the money laundering of politicians, which the country is unable to address owing to inadequate institutional governance. The political unrest in Pakistan has given rivals like India the chance to finance political parties and utilize them against their nation.

4. FUTURE OF HYBRID WARFARE IN SOUTH ASIA

Considering the basics of modern warfare and the escalating patterns of conflicts in South Asia, it becomes clear that both Pakistan and India are actively engaging in hybrid warfare. The genesis of warfare encompasses many other elements that affect the changes in warfare and requires hundreds of years to modify the trends in warfare. The application of technology and techniques has an impact on how war is fought, and technology always advances in this race. With the emergence of new and disruptive technologies, conventional weapons have become relatively less significant to be used in a conflict. It might be deduced that the development of technology has altered the old notion of war, but it cannot be affirmed that the employment of conventional weapons has completely ceased. Warfare still involves conventional weaponry, but how those weapons are used on the battlefield has evolved [28].

It wouldn't be incorrect to expect that the range of conventional weapons will be reduced with the increasing relevance of hybrid warfare techniques in

contemporary warfare discourse. Unconventional and conventional weaponry would remain relevant in any future confrontation between India and Pakistan. Nuclear weapons won't push India and Pakistan into a conventional conflict, but they won't eliminate the deterrent factor either. India and Pakistan would likely place unconventional strategies ahead on their priority lists if they wanted to avoid a full fledged war under nuclear overhang. Even when new military technologies will be developed, hybrid warfare would likely continue to remain relevant in South Asian context [29]. The conflict would still have a hybrid nature in South Asia. India and Pakistan would not rely on unconventional weapons, but they would rather actively try to expand their traditional military range of influence.

Future conflicts will use a mix of conventional and unconventional weapons of war, as predicted by Frank G. Hoffman in his book. States try their utmost to employ new technologies against their adversaries whenever they enter battle.

Although its application would be limited, nations still utilize these technologies alongside other types of warfare. Similar to other regions around the world, South Asia is expected to have seen the advent of emerging technology. India is also gaining these technologies in anticipation of a future confrontation with Pakistan.

5. ROLE OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES IN FUTURE WARFARE

Likewise, disruptive technologies and their role in warfare are currently a hot topic of discussion in the domain of warfare. The future generation of warfare is predicted to be shaped by these technologies and might revolutionize how war is fought. Emerging technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), cyberspace, anti-satellite (ASAT) weapons, robots, drones, and hypersonic weapons have the potential to transform warfare, and their use in upcoming wars poses grave challenges. Due to the capacity of some of these weapons to carry nuclear warheads, the advent of these disruptive technologies poses a risk to the use of nuclear weapons in military conflicts [30].

One of the most important disruptive technologies is artificial intelligence (AI), which consists of several tools that let machines monitor various activities, including military actions, around them and behave following the intelligence that has been given to them. AI is useful in cyberspace for detecting and blocking malicious cyber-attacks. Similarly, airborne drones may quickly recognize and attack enemy forces on a

battlefield by using sensors to locate and recognize them. AI and cyber-attacks are the most challenging weapons to restrict through arms control agreements since it is hard to measure them [31].

Unmanned weapons, autonomous weapons, or 'Lethal Autonomous Weapons' (LAWs) that jointly find and strike an adversary's assets using drone and AI technology are also a part of cyber-warfare. Another name for autonomous weapons that can be used to track the adversary without a person directly involved is killer robots. According to the US Department of Defense, autonomous weapons are "weapon systems that, once triggered, may choose and attack targets without additional human operator engagement" [32]. It would be catastrophic for global standards and prosperity if all these weapons are frequently deployed.

Hypersonic weapons, which travel at minimum five times speed of sound, can transport nuclear and other types of weaponry.

They are employed for both quick reactions and nuclear delivery systems. They are used to swiftly attack the enemy's targeted areas while the adversary is not even prepared and does not even contemplate being attacked. These non-nuclear weapons also pose a danger to strategic stability, perhaps raising the probability of an unavoidable response.

ASATs, or anti-satellite weapons, are responsible for the disintegration of outer space. ASAT weapons are making it riskier to conduct operations in outer space, especially those near the earth's orbit. For instance, when China performed an ASAT test in 2009, there were concerns all around the world.

India is investing in emerging technologies to secure its interests as a state. The goal of India's acquisition of disruptive technologies is to secure its national policy objectives against external challenges [33]. History proves that anytime India gained technology with the intention of using it peacefully, it subsequently turned that technology into a military realm. The same applies to the acquisition of emerging technologies. The Indian strategy is based on a hegemonic ambition since the country aims to be a regional hegemon and be seen as one of the world's great powers. India, on the contrary hand, is attempting to compete China technologically, particularly in the field of defense. India is working very hard to acquire emerging technology and the potential to deploy them against its adversaries. India also has the opportunity to utilize its strategic alliance with the US, since the latter wants India to be a

competitive state against China and to contain China's increasing influence in the region. The US has backed India in gaining more technology and military equipment. India has been part of several international agreements, treaties, and strategic partnerships by the US [33].

"Modern technologies like 5G, AI, block chain, virtual reality, machine learning & deep learning, robotics, and NLP are presently being prepared by India. All of this will play a vital part in both industry and government, whether it's strategy or decision-making, boosting development or reviewing deployment, problem-solving or product creation, or discovering new patterns or correlations" [34].

India is investing heavily in hypersonic cruise missile defense research and development, becoming the fourth nation to do so [30]. All the tri-services are currently working together with DRDO and Russia to build hypersonic missiles [35]. With the help of the DRDO and NPO, the Russian company Mashinostroyenia built the Brah Mos Aerospace firm to manufacture cruise missiles in New Delhi. The powered, air-breathing hypersonic cruise missiles (HCMs) can be launched from rocket boosters, where they float autonomously across the upper atmosphere until crashing into their destinations. Hypersonic weapons with nuclear or non-nuclear warheads can be used to selectively target nuclear weapons and command-and-control facilities, as well as to demolish mobile missiles, anti-satellite weaponry, radars, and missile-defense systems, warships, and other vital targets. India is also building HCMs, notably the Brahmos-II, to increase strategic deterrence over China and Pakistan [36].

South Asia is currently prone to a new arms race as a result of Indian ambitions to modernize its military by acquiring emerging technologies. Owing to the military's deployment of such technologies and the potential use of nuclear weapons, South Asia's strategic stability is once again in trouble. Modern technology advancements have increased the risk of full-scale war and the possible use of nuclear weapons by enabling warfare more viable. For instance, AI-controlled drones may find and take out hostile weapons like surface vessels, radars, and submarines. Hypersonic missiles offer first strikes during a conflict along with the deployment of cyber-attacks and nuclear warheads right at the start of the conflict. All of these strategies make it challenging for the targeted state to immediately conduct a counter strike or even a nuclear strike in retaliation.

Role of AI is likely to be increased in future Chinese and Indian military operations. Publicly accessible evidence reveals that Pakistan has not yet adopted an official policy on the application of artificial intelligence (AI) in defense, although it has just begun to work on research and development in the area of emerging technologies. However, the existing strategy might be insufficient to deal with the enemy's increasing threat. At the moment, Pakistan has no plans to apply these technologies to its military; instead, it is trying to advance research in these fields to assist the research community and other specialists in applying these technologies to the advancement of the nation. To strengthen the economy, such technologies are increasingly used in the agricultural sector. However, it is tough to deny the growing hostile regional environment. The security of the region is seriously threatened by India's pursuit of such disruptive new technologies. As India poses a significant challenge to South Asia and Pakistan is now unable to bridge the conventional gap, Pakistan has taken the position to restrict the disruptive application of these developing technologies.

It is difficult to forecast with any certainty whether Pakistan and India would use nuclear weapons in the future. The only thing that could be done is to draw out a few possible situations and offer policy recommendations [36].

6. CONCLUSION

While it seems impossible to predict a peaceful South Asia, one may forecast future wars thereby studying past conflicts and current patterns of conflict. The research confirms that hybrid warfare is an effective form of conflicts in South Asia going forward [12]. Due to the wide usage of this term by military officials and politicians, the concept of hybrid warfare has become more popular in South Asia than ever before.

One might say that upcoming wars would be hybrid if we understand the principles of modern warfare. Therefore, neither of the South Asian nations would completely rely on their military nor even their unconventional or non-military spheres. States are not allowed to compromise their conventional military capabilities. Given that India is acquiring emerging technologies that enables quick war fighting without even requiring the actual movement of its military troops, it may be assumed that future conflicts would be non-contact [28]. In order to avoid using extensive conventional military forces, deterrence will be essential considering the existence of nuclear weapons. Non-contact warfare, particularly economic

strategies that attempt to undermine a state's financial stability, will exacerbate the security problems that need to be resolved.

In South Asia, there are less likely possibilities for the deployment of disruptive technologies in warfare. Conflicts in South Asia are distinct and are based on unchangeable truths that might never be resolved. In pursuit of its regional hegemonic and great power ambitions, and to threaten Pakistan India is acquiring emerging technologies. Even if Pakistan necessitates a great deal of effort in the area of emerging technologies, it is unlikely that Pakistan would prevail in these disruptive technologies. Pakistan already faces considerable economic difficulties. Pakistan won't be able to purchase such costly military technologies due to its slow economic growth. It also has very limited resources to carry out research and development in the domain of disruptive technologies. India would have accomplished two of its national goals once it will possess these technologies. The first is to compete with China, and the other is to threaten Pakistan.

The research showed that both Pakistan and India might indulge in hybrid warfare which has already begun in the past few decades. However, the war strategies will differ from one another in nature, as do the technology and tactics. Warfare trends may be headed in the same direction, but technological advancements in hybrid warfare is happening at a different rate.

Considering that today is a digital generation with rapid and easy access to facts from a diverse range of sources, it is difficult to regulate and restrict the usage of media among the people and even a state. . In the contemporary era, social media is a real weapon, and there's no way to restrict public usage, particularly among young people. Countering cyber-attacks both inside and outside of a state is very challenging. India is making progress in the domain of cyberspace, while Pakistan stands far behind and is unable to readily counteract Indian cyber-attacks. To combat the propaganda and false information spread by the enemy, it is necessary to fight hard and act quickly.

NOMENCLATURE

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| FATF | Financial Action Task Force |
| RAW | Research and Analysis Wing |
| CPEC | China-Pakistan Economic Corridor |
| ANI | Asian News International |
| BLA | Baluchistan Liberation Army |
| TTP | Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan |

AI Artificial Intelligence
ASAT Anti-Satellite Weapons
LAWS Lethal Autonomous Weapons

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